

ship, and power, how could a 1580s play by Marlowe express “proto-orientalist conceits” (46), or “Enobarus’ rhapsody” in 2.2.201-8 be “a set-piece of proto-orientalist vision” (65) when it was taken verbatim, as Barbour carefully notes, from Sir Thomas North’s translation of Plutarch?

Before Orientalism is an important book. In an ideal world, its impressive scholarship would have been accompanied by a rigorous theoretical formulation.

Ronald W. Cooley. *“Full of all knowledg”: George Herbert’s Country Parson and Early Modern Social Discourse*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004. 238 pp. + 1 illus. \$50.00 Review by MARGARET J. OAKES, FURMAN UNIVERSITY.

It has become a commonplace to warn students encountering *The Temple* for the first time not to dismiss these poems as Sunday School-ish sing-alongs—the poetry is deceptively simple. The nursery rhyme-like appearance of some poems in the collection and their seemingly straightforward ideas belie intricate schemes of rhyme and rhythm, explorations of profound theological puzzles that parallel historical disputes over both theological tenets and those matters supposedly belonging to the “adiaphora,” and mature, multi-layered modes of approaching the divine. Ronald W. Cooley argues that the same principle of critical attention to an illusory simplicity should apply when encountering *The Country Parson*. Just as we cannot assume that the *via media* of the seventeenth-century English church (if such a thing actually existed) presented a smooth and internally consistent set of values and practices, we cannot assume that Herbert is following previously “constructed” positions and policies on ecclesiastical or doctrinal matters. In fact, Cooley argues that Herbert is actually part of a series of church figures who were in the process of negotiating among conflicting positions in the Church on numerous matters after it was freed from the oppressive stasis of the Elizabethan Compromise in his “effort to steer a course between a retreating conformist Calvinism and an advancing Arminian authority” (41).

Cooley theorizes, rather, that this complicated, sometimes even apparently contradictory, text is a reflection of the tensions in the Jacobean and Caroline courts and churches, and of the changing social and economic life of potential parishioners.

Cooley grounds his argument theoretically by employing the contradictions of a Foucaultian picture of power relations and a Marxist, materialist view of history. He says that *The Country Parson* manifests contradictions that are “discursively constructed and nonsubjective” in the Foucaultian tradition, and that also create “the political, social and material advantage of some, to the disadvantage of others” (11). The aim of Cooley’s approach is to acknowledge these contradictions in seventeenth century culture and find their reflections in Herbert’s prescriptive work.

In the first chapter, the popular characterization of Herbert in criticism of the last twenty years, of “Herbert’s commitment to a common core of [Protestant] ideas” (27), is rejected. Gene Veith, Richard Strier, and Christopher Hodgkins, the mainstays of Herbert criticism in the 1980s and 1990s, are said to ignore the possibilities of the array of ecclesiastical and theological opinions circulating in the decade or so in which Herbert was considering or participating in the clerical profession. Cooley reiterates the notion of the complete overhaul of the English clergy after the Reformation in terms of higher standards of education and clerical responsibilities to oversee and improve the morality of his parishioners through preaching and godly example. He goes on to outline the delicate balance of tensions described above through figures such as Laud and John Davenant, the Calvinist Bishop of Salisbury. While Davenant was best known for being such an opponent of Arminianism that he was one of the English delegates to the Synod of Dort, Cooley points out that he and Laud might agree in situations where “lay encroachment on episcopal authority” was a threat (39). Cooley emphasizes the function of the Jacobean church as a social force to promote a particular picture of public order and morality that could be reached through “the range of stances available” to a parson (50).

These differing stances on offer for a parson to reach his flock are outlined in the third chapter, the strongest and most innovative in the book. Entitled "*The Country Parson and the Enclosure of Professional Fields*," this chapter seeks to explain the borrowings in *The Country Parson* from the discourses of law and medicine, and the sometimes-problematic relationship revealed in the positioning of the cleric to his professional counterparts. The use of the word "professional" gets to the heart of the matter for Cooley, who describes the members of these specialized areas as simultaneously engaging in a process of "professionalization and self-definition" (58) that seemed to result in a zero-sum game for the three groups: Herbert paradoxically borrows from the terminology and concepts of law and medicine to, in the author's terms, "enclose" and expand the role and authority of the clergy. In this chapter, Cooley adopts another theoretical framework, that of the Weberian notions of the "traditional" and "legal-rational," to describe Herbert's intentions and actions. Herbert plays on the strengths and weaknesses of the other two professions to promote his own: the parson (and his wife) has the authority to attend to the health, both spiritual and physical, of his parishioners in a traditional fashion opposed to the supposedly "book learned," quasi-official practitioner of medicine supervised by the Royal College of Physicians (a notion perhaps more popular in a rural area such as Bemerton). Similarly, he casts the parson in legal terms at the beginning of "The Parson's Completeness" as a strategy to appropriate the authority of the law to both regulate the behavior of his fold and, on a larger scale, maintain control over the role of the church in social reform, especially for relief of the poor. Cooley argues that Herbert promoted the traditional role of the church in the political tool of the dispensation of charity, a "powerful means of generating dependence and compliance" over the emerging power of the civic authorities in that area (79). This chapter is especially persuasive of Cooley's thesis in its expansion of Herbert's view of the world from the rural Wiltshire pulpit to the events of his time; he is not just using the discourses of law and medicine to advise his fellow parsons in regulating the spiritual health and moral behavior of

their parishioners, but is actually creating the profession that he also professes to advise. Cooley regrettably does not include the obvious reference to Stephen Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, thereby disregarding critical support for his view of Herbert's desire to "consolidate and extend [the] influence" of the clergy (56) through a conscious process of subjective definition and separation from other roles.

Cooley goes on in the following chapter to develop the idea that Herbert was involved in a negotiation of evolving social forces in rural Wiltshire and throughout England. The physical enclosure of land for pasturing is continued as a metaphor for the negotiations involved in refining the profession role of the clergy: Cooley points out that enclosure was not, in fact, always the evil condemned by More a century earlier in the *Utopia*, but was in fact a shift from common arable land, subject to lax maintenance by the slothful, to a system "facilitating more intensive cultivation rather than conversion of arable to pasture" (87). In other words, a negotiation process was taking place that redefined a change which was once viewed as ruinous of traditional practices as a practice which could be used to enforce proper social and economic behavior. While Cooley seems to strain the argument by claiming that Herbert's physical residence in the "two very different rural economies" (95) of Wiltshire would cause "Herbert's conversion to the cause of agricultural innovation," it does seem generally arguable, and more to the point, that the flux in social and economic practices in general that he witnessed could result in "the generally contradictory character of his portrait of rural life" in *The Country Parson* (97).

The paternal and patriarchal nature of the clerical profession is the subject of Chapter Four. Cooley succinctly and persuasively draws out the parallels and dissimilarities between the fathering of a family and the fathering of a parish, and also highlights the tensions involved in the latter caused by these parallels; specifically, how does a clergyman approach a titled parishioner about some objectionable behavior, in a role which at once positions him as moral teacher and social inferior? He concludes that Herbert's intention was to have clergy delegate the enforcement role; i.e.,

shift the policing of the family unit onto the appropriate figure, relying on “the diffusion of disciplinary power throughout the community” (132).

Despite the title of the book and its emphasis on historical contextualizing, Cooley seems to feel compelled to turn to *The Temple* to reinforce his points about the prose professional manual. The fifth chapter examines in scrupulous detail connections between the poetry and historical issues in the court, the cloth trade, evolving agricultural techniques, and other areas. This chapter is not as connected to Cooley’s overall thesis as it might be, and draws conclusions about extremely specific historical information being reflected in this spiritual poetry that sometime seem speculative. The information about “The Water-Course” is illuminating, but the arguments about the differences between the Williams and Bodleian manuscripts do not result in a point that seems useful to a greater understanding of *The Country Parson*.

In situating *The Country Parson* deeply in its social, political, and economic environments, Ronald Cooley takes seriously the title of the work: The country parson is truly a member of a religious professional cohort and is a fully participating member of his society, attendant to its larger problems and pressures from many quarters. *The Temple* is frequently studied in the context of the theological and ecclesiastical disputes of Herbert’s day. The relationship between *The Country Parson* and the universe in which that parson operates deserves similar consideration, and Cooley has done significant work to that end.

Olav Lausund and Stein Haugom Olsen, eds. *Self-fashioning and Metamorphosis in Early Modern English Literature*. Oslo: Novus Press, 2003. xx + 260 pp. □32.80. Review by DAVID GRANT MOSS, VIRGINIA TECH UNIVERSITY.

Self-fashioning and Metamorphosis in Early Modern English Literature is a collection of articles gathered from the proceedings of a conference on early modern literature at the University of Oslo. The book’s strengths and weaknesses are in many ways connected